THE WISDOM OF THE RISHIS

By

T. L. VASWANI

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TO

YÂGNAVALKYA

A SEER OF THE SECRET

THE BLUE LIGHT OF ASPIRATION

And the Master said.
Behold ! I come
Quicker than light !
Quicker than thought !
Let but the heart
Within thee bathe
From more to more
In the bright, blue light
Of *Aspiration !*

T. L. VASWANI

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In this little volume is embodied the substance of some of my addresses on the Wisdom of the Rishis. A companion volume embodying texts from the Scriptures throwing further light on the views herein set forth will follow.

I hear India's true original voice in her Ancient Culture. Many of her modern things and movements are an imitation; and the world respects not imitation but what is your own. There is growing appreciation of Indian culture in the West. Ignorant admiration is not appreciation. Not many even in India seem to realise the value and message of Indian Culture. Many years ago I met Prof. Winternitz in Berlin. We had an interesting talk on India and Indian Culture. When

taking leave of him, I said, "What service can I do for you on my return to India?" The learned Prof. said, "Send me some Sanskrit manuscripts." In Bristol, I stayed as guest in the house of Prof. Sibree. He was Professor of Oriental Languages in the Bristol University. How his face glowed with joy when he spoke of the East and her Ancient Wisdom! In Lahore I was agreeably surprised, one day, to receive a visit from the famous Orientalist, Dr. Oldenburg. He spoke of the Ideals and achievements of ancient India! Revival of Greek studies led to a great Renaissance which did much for the life of Europe. A new Renaissance, I believe, is to grow out of a revival of Sanskrit-Pali studies. This new Ranaissance will secure the world's respect for India. And if she has survived the shock of centuries it is because, I believe, she is destined to give the message of her humanistic, spiritual Culture to the World. Therefore have I pleaded again and

again for a new study of the Wisdom of the Rishis.

Several Great Rishis are mentioned in the Mahabharata, and the Manusamhita. Rishi Yagnavalkya's Dialogue with Maitreyi is one of the most impressive passages in the world's literature and embodies a wonderful philosophy of the Atman. The Atman is the Eternal Subject. The Atman knows Himself. You may not know the Atman as an *Object*. You must enter into the Atman, be in the Atman to know the Atman. Rishi Sandilya taught that the Atman in the Heart, smaller than a grain of mustard seed, is yet greater than all the worlds. Rishi Uddalaka declares the mystic truth that Brahman is One without a second!

The Rishis, I humbly submit, developed a Science of Man-Culture which has a vital value for us. It is a Science of *Ananda* (joy). "The Brahman," we read in one of the Upanishads, "is verily the Full". And in the

fullness of the Self, the *Atman*, is *ananda*. So the Rishis sang, "Brahman is Bliss." How superior this vision to the Roman synthesis of life suggested by the word "religion" (*religio*) which would "bind" men through fear of the Gods. The Greek synthesis of life was in terms of the Beautiful and was a nearer approach to the Rishi's synthesis. "Beauty," said Isocrates the orator, is the "first of all things in majesty, honour and divineness. Care for beauty is to us perfectly a religion". The mediæval Christain synthesis did well in recognising that man's salvation was in living communion with God; but its anti-humanism, its crude dualism, its warfare against the world, its neglect of nature, its externalism, its emphasis on obedience to an external authority, its cult of the miraculous and supernatural, its intolerance of free reflective consciousness and its doctrine of hell showed how far it was from the vision of the Upanishads. "Brahman is joy." Turn over the

pages of the Upanishads and you find over and over again declarations such as the following.

"The Infinite is Joy; there is no Joy in anything finite divorced from the Infinite. Even as a grain of rice or the smitten smallest granule of millet, is the Golden Purusha ("Person") in my heart; even as a smokeless light the Purusha is greater than the sky, greater than ether, greater than the earth, greater than all existing things. That Self is myself. On passing away from hence I shall obtain Self, and verily whoever has this trust, for him there is no uncertainty."

"There is one Eternal Thinker thinking non-eternal thoughts. The thought of the One fulfils the desire of many. The wise who perceive Him within their Self—to them belongs Eternal Life, Eternal Peace. He the highest Purusha Who is awake in us while we are asleep, shaping one lovely sight after another, He indeed is Bright, the Brahman, and alone is called the Immortal."

"The Self of selves, the Ancient Purusha, He who is the ear of ear, the mind of mind, the speech of speech, is verily the Life of life, the Eye of the eye."

The truth of the Antaryamin Purusha, the Indwelling Self, is sung over and over again by seers of the Upanishads. Man is man because the Eternal Purusha (Person) dwells in him; and God is the deepest Self of man. Just think of this wondrous idea! Each one of you is a child of Eternal Joy; in each one is tabernacled the Eternal Self. When a cup has milk more than it can contain, it begins to overflow. So have I sometimes thought of the universe—thought of it as an overflow of the Ananda of the Eternal Self. God's Eternal Self, the Mother-Heart of the Universe overflowing with love travels along the tracks of time, the fields of space and so it is that finite centres of consciousness—projections on the earth plane—of Eternal joy spring up. The world is not an illusion, a mere psychological

construction; the world is a Self-utterance of Eternal Joy. Yagnavalkya with wondrous insight represented the phenomena of the world as notes of a lute or conch-shell; the lute is the Atman—lute on which plays the Purusha, the Ancient Self. The Universe is a growing Song of Self. To-day churches are cumbered with "creeds". In ancient India, Religion was regarded as a Science. They named it Brahmavidya or Atmavidya. Yes—Religion is not mere "belief". Religion is knowledge.

To know that the Atman is reality—the Reality of Experience—is to know that Life is endless. Ye are children of Immortality. What is death? A gate to another Life. To understand this is to be fearless. Ancient India understood this and so built up a refined, humanistic civilisation; and a Hindu yogi could meet the challenge of Alexander's threat with the bold declaration: "Kill me, if you will; my soul is immortal."

No knowledge without discipline. No realisation without sadhanas. Many sadhanas are indicated by the Rishis. Some of these sadhanas are of the body. I believe that the Life Spiritual has a physical basis....And to grow in spirituality you must gradually purify and control the *koshas*, sheaths, for through them functions the Atman. I shall not consider now the question of the different sheaths. I shall speak a word or two in regard only to the physical vehicle. The Chandogya-Upanishad, in a characteristic passage, speaks of the physical body as a "city of Brahman"! A pregnant thought! Body is a city of God. The Rishis had not the contempt for the physical, the natural which led to India's downfall! The body is a wonderful city! In it dwells the Wonderful One, the Atman. To understand this is to have reverence for the Body. All its limbs are sacred. Therefore keep them healthy and strong. Keep them pure. Attune them to Nature. Don't neglect the senses. Don't

suppress them. Transform them into servants of the Atman. Shun *bhoga*. Grow into a noble manhood. Self-realisation does not mean sense-enjoyment. Be simple. Be strong. And use your strength in the service of humanity. He finds his Beloved who loses himself in the service of others. Spirituality is not inactive thought or emotion. Spirituality is a synthesis of values—"satyam," "sivam," "sundaram" (Truth, goodness, beauty) which express themselves, also, in the outer world. They who would travel in the path of spiritual life must help in the work of evolution.

Such faith and vision inspired the life of ancient India. And when she led the nations in the dawn of history she led in the strength of the Life Spiritual. A Race of Rishis guided India and made her truly great. To-day she lies, with strength suppressed, beneath the burden of customs, castes and creeds. To-day her children are in bondage. So many of the big ones, alas! are busy with materialism and

money-bags. My hope is in the youth of India. For youth has idealism. Out of idealism are the issues of life. And in worship of the Spirit is the strength of a nation.

March, *1928* T. L. VASWANI

THE RELIGION OF THE RISHI

IN two beautiful words is expressed, to my mind, the essence of the Rishi's Religion—*darshan* and *dharma*. *Darshan*! There you have the mystical basis of life. *Darshan* is *vision*—Vision of the Living Ideal. Poets, artists, philosophers, prophets commune with a *darshan*. I believe a darshan of the Ideal is open to every seeker; it is not the monopoly of a chosen few. A *notion* of God is not what makes a man religious; not a God-concept but a God-experience is the great need of life. Without that *experience*, life is a poor, shrunken thing.

Is there life after death?—the people ask to-day. The answer to that question is not *theology* but *darshan*. Spiritual experience, not arguments, will do away with fear of death. The sad world needs a message of hope. Who

can give it except men and women of *Darshan?*

Darshan, too, will discover Laws of the Spiritual Life. There is a science of nature; there should be a science of God. Brahmavidya—is the expressive word they used in ancient India. Brahmavidya was with the Rishis a study of the Laws of Spiritual Life. One of these Laws is Prayer—"Ask and it shall be given unto you". Can we re-discover the Laws the Rishis saw? And re-discovering them, can we trace them in the history of Religion? Spiritual experience or *darshan* would disclose to us the unities and differences of world-religions. The differences would, I trust, be recognised not as discords but as elements which enrich the religious life of man. Differences make Harmony. With darshan, also, would come a clearing up of certain conceptions such as *infinity*, *truth*, *maya*. Why do we worship the Ideal as Infinite? In what sense is the world a *Maya*? In what

way is the world-maya consistent with Truth? Some light upon these and other questions may, I think, be thrown if religion be studied—as the Rishis did—as a *science*.

Their interest in the problem of religion was not *academic* but *scientific* and *spiritual*. They claimed to see the realities of religion. The modern critic says he has searched the heavens with his telescope but found no God! The Rishis spoke of *atman* as the "seat" of the Eternal; the modern student of psychology says that mind or thought is but a secretion of the brain! The comparative method, the historical and sociological methods of studying religion, have their value; but they only study some actions and reactions concerning religious rites and creeds and their environments. The essence of religion, we read in an Upanishad is not known to those who are *darshanavihina*—*i.e.*, devoid of spiritual experience. "Are you happy, Master?" was the question Plato put to his Master, Socrates, a little before the latter

drank the cup of hemlock. And Socrates said.—" I have seen the Imperishable. I have spoken to the Mighty, the Lofty, the Pure." Socrates spoke as a sage, a seer, a man of *darshan.*

Once you have a vision of the Great Wise Law, once you touch at some point, art or science or philosophy or literature or worship or sacrifice or love—the Great Mystery that stands behind evolution, you realise the meaning of Religion! Then there passes into you a peace that makes you a servant of Humanity.

For the life of religion is, also, a life of *action.* The Rishis were not quietists; many of them were householders; some were great lawgivers. *Darshan* and *dharma*, as I have already said, express the essence of the Rishi's Religion. *Darshan* and *dharma* must together mould society, nation, humanity. And action must grow out of *darshan.* A Civilization that has no vision must perish. In modern life there is, unfortunately, a cleft between

vision and action. The scholar and the scientist gather knowledge; the man of action, the politician is anxious to produce external results. But science becomes a weapon of destruction and politicians become diplomats when there is no reference to that Spiritual Ideal of which *darshan* and *dharma* are the two essential elements. Darshan is vision of the Ideal—idealism; dharma is practice of the Law, the Great Law which binds Humanity—*humanism.* The one goes with the other; to deny Humanity is to deny the Ideal. A denial of Man is a denial of God. The Rishi had reverence for Humanity. He who worships the vision can not have hate in his heart. In education and social work, in politics and national activities—are we denying Humanity? One thing I know, the message of the Rishis is not for us alone; it is for the world; for the message came to them from the World-Heart. If nationality fails to be a spiritual principle, it becomes—as religion

itself has become again and again—an obstacle to the God-Life. Is nationalism enough? Is not Humanity higher than the Nations? Is not a deeper co-operation with the Infinite Living Ideal a need of civilization?

Nation-cults in East and West have emphasised the Will-to-power. The message of the Rishis is: develop the Will-to-sacrifice. Not a cult of power but the Cult of Sacrifice—is the message of the Spiritual Life. The vision of the Ideal is a vision of the great Sacrificial Heart of the Universe. And the great Law which binds Humanity is *tapasya*. Out of sacrifice are born systems and planets. And if you would be a living sacrifice, practise *tapasya*. That is the *dharma* of life. Practise *tapasya*. You will purify the nation; you will make the nation strong. The psychology of strength is *tapasya*—not numbers, not even organization but *tapasya*. For to the man of *tapasya* flows a strength from the Great Reservoir that is within. Therefore it is that *idealists* and

humanists become centres of mighty movements. Such men are the nations' need to-day. Such men will become the builders of a new Civilization.

WHO WERE THE RISHIS?[1]

TO-DAY, as you may know, is a sacred day; and yesterday, too, was sacred. To-day is the Rishi Tarpan day—a day sacred to the Rishis; and remember! the Rishis are not the monopoly of India. The Rishis have appeared in different parts of the world; the bodies are Eastern or Western, but the souls belong neither to East or West; the souls are of the Eternal. And yesterday was a day sacred to a Rishi of the West, even as to-day is sacred to the Rishis of India. Yesterday was the death anniversary of William Blake. He was a mystic, an artist, a seer, a poet, a man who had visions of the spiritual world; he saw picture after picture of the Unseen. And he put those pictures in his wonderful, symbolical poems.

[1] From an address at the Shakti Ashram, Rajpur.

The Rishi Tarpan day! on such a day, the Aryan Rishis, I imagine, came out of their ashramas, came out of their forests and hills and hermitages to visit towns and villages. The Rishis came to distribute among the people rich treasures of the Spirit they had collected during the period of their meditations and tapasya in the ashramas. The Rishis were not ascetics but humanists—great lovers of the people. The Rishis would enter villages and ask if the king and officials had been good to the people or not; and if complaints reached them they—the great ones, great alike in vision and in shakti—they carried the complaints of the people to the king and tried to have their grievances removed. So it was that the Aryan rule made for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. India, then, was prosperous, strong and free. Mr. Havel has shown in his great book that India under the Aryan rule was prosperous and happy as, perhaps, no other nation in the world. The Rishis came out of

their seclusion from time to time and blessed the people. And I, a lover of dreams, of visions, I picture to myself the Rishis as coming to us on the Rishi Tarpan day, blessing us in this Shakti ashram blessing India, blessing the nations of the earth.

Three things are needed for the upliftment of India. They are: (1) Smriti or remembrance. (2) Swamana or self-respect. (3) Swadhinata or self-reliance. (1) Remember who you are. (2) Respect yourselves and show in your daily life that you really respect yourselves. No imitation of foreign fashions will help you. Imitation never built a nation. Only when you do things in obedience to your own genius and ideals may you hope to advance. This day take home with you some remembrance of the Rishis. And as far as I remember fourteen great Rishis are mentioned. Fourteen is a mystical number—a multiple of seven ! In addition, there have been others, those who are spoken of not as the Great Rishis,

(Maha Rishis), but as Rishis; and they all have left us a great message. Let me indicate some characteristics of the Rishis. I am afraid the word "Rishi" is loosely used to-day. Many do not seem to realise how great were those Great Ones.

(1) The Rishis were seers—men of the seeing power, men of vision. I know, sometimes, the word Rishi is used to mean "learned man"; but the word means much more. One may read many books; one may be a scholar without being a Rishi. The Rishis, we read, saw the *mantras*! The mantras are vibrations, pulsations from the Eternal. The Rishis received them at first hand. We talk and argue; the Rishis were men of direct knowledge; their souls were linked up with vibrations of the World-Mind. The Rishis were seers of the Spiritual Realm. There are learned men, men of scholarship and culture; and I would sit at their feet to learn many things. But a mere scholar is not a Rishi. A

Rishi is one whose inner psychical, spiritual organism has been developed—one whose "third eye" has been opened.

(2) The Rishis, in the second place, were creative personalities; they came with a tremendous *Shakti*. Centres were they of higher forces, and so became builders of the Aryan civilization. Mark the difference between the Hindu way and the current way of looking at the evolution of humanity. Western sociologists say that primitive man was in a barbarous state, and then slowly, and painfully, he climbed up to the present stage; so that we of to-day are wiser in every way than the ancients. Therefore the Western people find it difficult to appreciate the view of those of us who speak of "Ancient Wisdom." The Hindu says—humanity in that stage of evolution had all the greater need of guidance; and so some mighty ones came—some great souls—and took charge of evolution; so we read that the Rishis stood in the very forefront of our progress; the

Rishis became the builders and guardians of civilization. Rishis were sons of Shakti.

(3) The Rishis, in the third place, were radiant personalities, radiant with love for all —for men and animals and trees. The Rishis were sons of the Spirit. For the Spirit is Love.

This day is named the Rishi Tarpan day. What is the meaning of Tarpan? The word means, among other things food, offerings. What food, what offering will you give to the Rishis to-day? Offer them the love and reverence of your hearts. Have faith in your destiny. And let this day sow the seed in your hearts of a sacred resolve that you will do something to vindicate in your lives the ancient message—the message of the Rishis, the message of God!

SCIENCE OF MAN-CULTURE[1]

COMING to this beautiful spot, there rise before my mind's eye, pictures of the ashramas of ancient India. Centres of true spiritual culture, they were situated in spots beautified and blessed by nature; worshippers of Truth and Love dwelt therein; and they were helped, nourished and inspired by Rishis, Seers of the Open Secret.

I happen to be here on a day which is sacred in the Hindu calendar. This day, the Sankrant Day, Hindus get up early, take bath and worship Fire. Fire to me is a symbol of a creative principle of the Universe. On this day, too, Hindus worship their Ancestors; Pitripuja in Hinduism, as ancestor-worship in China, I regard as a principle of a vital civilization. The present must not be cut off

[1] From an address at Adyar, Madras.

from the Living Past if we are to build for the Future. Now this word Sankrant means, literally, "transition". And it seems to me we are in a period of transition. Materlinck wrote many years ago. "We live in an age of expectation". Expectation of a new impulse, a new birth, a new creation, a new manifestation of the spirit! The new, like the sunrise every day, will be, I submit, a new unfolding, a new appearance of the Ancient, the Eternal young. The ashramas I speak of were centres of search and study of the Ancient Wisdom.

It seems to me that the ashramas had certain advantages over so many of the modern centres of thought and culture. The ashramas were invariably in contact with nature. "We want the poetry of life,"—said Shelley. The Rishis had the poetry of life. What a thrill of joy in the hymns and songs of the Vedas and the Upanishads? It is not correct, I humbly submit, to say as do Western

critics of the Rishis that they were pessimistic. They were immensely optimistic. They communed with the spirit of joy. They, also, enjoyed more leisure. Civilization has become very complex to-day; and economic pressure is heavy. Much of our time is taken up with meeting the material needs of life. The Rishis belonged to an age of simple civilization. They had leisure. Leisure is not idleness, but consecration of inner energies to the deeper values of life.

So it was that the Rishis developed a Science which, I believe, has a value and message for the modern man. We speak to-day of agriculture, sericulture, horticulture. Why may there not be a science of Man-Culture? Such a science would be the Supreme Science. The problem of Man-Culture, as it presented itself before the Rishis' illuminated mind, was the problem of the evolution of Man into the Super-Man. The Super-Man of the Spirit. Not the Super-Man of aggressiveness.

The Science of Man-Culture I speak of must not be confounded with what is known as Anthropology. It has 2 aspects. (1) physical Anthropology. This is the study of man regarded as a biological entity, *i.e.*, the study of natural man. (2) Cultural Anthropology, *i.e.*, the study of man as creator of civilization. Hence the central note of the Rishis' wisdom is the *Atman.* This word is in English, often, rendered as "Self". May I not, also, use the word "Spirit"? Both the words "Atman" and "Spirit" are connected radically with "Breath". The cosmic process was by the ancient Rishis interpreted in terms of "Breath". "Breathing in" and "Breathing out" of Brahman were, according to the Rishis' vision, the two aspects of the Life-process of the Universe. So it was that the illuminated minds of the Rishis discovered what I believe to be the basic law of manifestation—the *Law of Rhythm.* But I will not go into this aspect of the matter on this occasion. Sufficient be it for me to note

that the emphasis in the Rishis' science of Man-Culture is on the *Atman.* So in that wonderful answer to the question of Maitreyi – one of the great ladies of ancient India— Yagnyavalkya says. "As out of the lute are the sounds and out of the trumpets blown are the sounds, so out of the Atman are sciences and scriptures". An illuminated saying this— that scriptures and sciences are breathed forth from the Atman!

There are three doctrines essential to the science of man-culture of which I speak—

(*a*) *Brahmacharya.* This is often translated into English by the cold word "celibacy". I interpret "brahmacharya" to mean "Reverence for the creative force" or reverence for the Body. It was, to the Rishis, a manifestation of the Eternal. Shri Krishna rejoiced in the beauty of Nature. India fell in the day when she developed contempt for matter. The doctrine of Brahmacharya asks you to have reverence for your body as a temple of the

Spirit. There is a creative force in you. It is sacred. To realise more and more the sanctity of the life-force is to grow in the true spirit of brahmacharya. It has several aspects. There is the brahmacharya of the eye; therefore look upon none with lust. There is the brahmacharya of the ears; therefore listen not to words of ill-will or hate against any. There is the brahmacharya of the tongue; therefore control your appetites. There is the brahmacharya of thoughts; therefore discipline and regulate them for service, not for a selfish purpose. There is the brahmacharya of the heart; therefore be not over-emotional. "Out of the heart are the issues of life"! As you grow in the spirit of brahmacharya your body will be gradually transformed. You will be a ray of His purity. You will be over-shadowed by the Spirit. Your face will be radiant. The Beloved will shine through you!

(b) *Atmavidya*—This is the second element essential to the Science of Man-Culture.

Atmavidya is *Knowledge* in the deeper sense of that word. Much of what we call knowledge is only pragmatic or working knowledge ; it is the knowledge *about* an object ; it is knowledge that moves round a thing ; it is knowledge on the *circumference.* But true knowledge is entering into the object ; it is knowledge from within, from the *centre* ; it is a simple direct act ; it is knowledge that goes right into the stream of life, the Life-movement of which the object is a manifestation ! It is the knowledge of a genius, a seer, an artist, a poet—the knowledge that radiates from the centre. This knowledge is blended with *bhakti*, is charged with devotion or love. Science and sympathy ;—it is right to recognise the distinction between the two ; it is not right to say that the distinction is separation.

(*c*) *Union or Yoga with Matter*—This is the source of nature-mysticism of the Upanishads. To enter into this Yoga is to realize that the body is from God, that birth is of divine origin

not a fall, that matter is an apparition of the Eternal. (2) *Union or Yoga with the life-pulse of history and humanity*—To enter into this Yoga is to enter into fellowship with spiritual leaders of the human race. Then you revere all prophets and saints; you respect all scriptures. (3) *Yoga or union with the Atman within*—He is the Master of masters, the Sat-Guru. And He is seated in the "cavity" of your heart. To enter into this yoga is to be filled with Love and to realize that true love is yagna, is sacrifice. Self-realization is sacrifice; and sacrifice is self-realization. "Yagna" or Sacrifice—is the great note sounded, again and again, in the songs of the Rishis. And this yagna again is twofold. (i) Yagna of manas, *i.e.*, restraint or sacrifice of the lower mind—the faculty of calculation and prudence; (ii) Yagna of the psychic nature or the desire-principle. This twofold Yagna means the sacrifice of "egoism", the sacrifice of "personality". I sometimes say:—Behind all "personality"

stands the Super-Purusha. The Krishna-Light, the Christ-Light, shines in glory when the veils of "ego" are withdrawn. Not till the lower hath sacrificed itself may the Spirit of Love be richly manifested. To be impersonal is to enter into Love.

This, then, is the supreme end of the Science of Man-Culture—self-dedication, self-sacrifice. The Science of Man-Culture in its perfected form is the Science of *Samarpana*. The true super-man is the man Sacrificial; and better than salvation is Sacrifice!

THE MYSTICAL MESSAGE OF THE EAST[1]

In the beginning—so runs an ancient Eastern story—the sun was not, the moon was not, the stars were not, the world was not, in the beginning was Love, Eternal Love, Love pure and fair beyond compare. And in the heart of Eternal Love awoke the idea: "I am One. I shall function as many." And God, the Perfect One, differentiated Himself, the Parent-Spirit projected centres of His life; and planets were formed and pathways of the worlds were woven with the wonders of form and beauty and glorified with the glory of conscious souls destined to live and grow in the love that is the Sovereign Self of all.

[1] From an address at the King's Weigh House, London.

This story is an allegory. I believe the Spirit of Love presides over the evolution of East and West. The One Parent-Spirit of all has blessed them with diverse gifts, and the service which true patriots may render is to draw them closer, not tear them apart. Both East and West have qualities which have their value for the higher organization of the life of Humanity. True, there are differences between East and West; but differences are not discords; the one purpose of the Parent-Spirit, the divine intention of history, is realized through diversity.

Let me add that, in speaking of the mystical message of the East I do not mean to suggest that mystic communion with God is the monopoly of the East. In every age and nation God has his people, souls who gravitate to God and cry for communion with the Only One. "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself and our souls are restless till they rest in Thee!" Mysticism is not the monopoly of the East.

Not many in the West have entered into a right apprehension of the mystical consciousness of the East. Some confound her mysticism with asceticism; they forget that the inwardness of the Hindu is not passive isolation but active attunement with the Eternal. Some confound it with "psychism"; this I call "phenomenism" in religion; it is referred to as "devavidya" in the Hindu books and the devotee is asked not to confound it with Brahmavidya, the Wisdom of God. Some confound Hindu mysticism with mayaism. Rev. Bernard Lucas in a beautiful book on "The Empire Christ" writes thus. "The world of matter is to the Hindu not merely an unreal world in the sense that the true reality is underlying it, it is essentially a deceptive world". But over and over again it is said in Hindu books that the World is a revelation of the Infinite Energy, that God is "The inner Self of all." Read the "Ninth Discourse" in the Bhagavad-Gita. Shri Krishna unfolds the

world-vision to the enraptured gaze of Arjuna, the disciple. In the range of world-literature there is one other such incident, that which relates to Jesus' transfiguration when his disciples "were with Him on the Holy Mount". And the very centre-point of the "Ninth Discourse" in the Gita is the idea that the universe may be seen as a Body of God. Dr. Caird in his "Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers" says: "In the ascent of Divine Unity the mystic loses hold of every thing by which he could positively characterize it and when he arrives at it, it is with empty hands". To the Hindu mystic God is the In-Soul (the *Antaryamin*) of all.

To accept and assimilate the revelation of God in Nature, History, and Life, is the craving of the true mystic.

Max Nordau condemns mysticism as "the result of an exhausted or degenerate brain." Vaughan says it is a "form of error which mistakes for Divine manifestation the operation

of merely human faculty"; and even so great a student of theology as Professor Wilhelm Hermann is of opinion that "the Church must declare the mystical experience (of God) to be a delusion."

But are not the Prophets of the Ideal mystics? Are not the greatest movements of history initiated, inspired, and sustained by mystics? Do not the deeper relations of life —friendship, faith, communion, reverence, worship, love—touch the mystical deeps of life? Is it not true that poetry, art, philosophy, literature, music, sound a mystical note the moment they become catholic, universal, in their outlook upon life and the universe? Can you hold Reality with the reins of rationalism?

Mysticism is the way of the soul. Immediate correspondence with God is the mystic's ideal. The mystic is not satisfied till, crossing external media, he has entered the Central Shrine of the Soul, the Great Centre of the Lights—the

Father-Mother God. Well sang an Eastern mystic: "I wandered till I saw the Light within!" The soul must go straight to God. So it is that to the mystic, God is not an "other" but the IMMEDIATE, not an "object" among other objects but the Deepest Self of his own soul. Internal union with God is of the essence of the mystic's ideal.

"The kingdom of God is within you." God is not alone immanent but is the very In-Soul of all. Every "I" is a centre of the Parent-Spirit; the Universe is a self-giving of God; we are greater than we know ourselves to be; man is Soul of His Spirit, breath of His Breath, reason of His Reason, love of His Love. Our home is in the Mother-Heart. The finite must be re-discovered in God; and the whole world-process must be seen as a stream of light in the Divine Immensity. Say not this is pantheism; it is *pan-en-theism*; it is mysticism. And it has the following characteristics:

1. Love of the Contemplative Life

India from the beginning of her days has been a lover of the contemplative life. Her "great" men have not been multi-millionaires immersed in the commerce and confusion of great cities but men of soul-culture, lovers of quiet, of nature-communion, of meditation—men who have practised yoga. The note of emphasis in ancient India was on the interior life—on sympathy, service and love—on oneness with all through communion with the One-in-all. The Hindu system of spiritual culture was based on meditation—on the idea that spiritual life must be an internal assimilation of the Divine which is more than an external imitation of a model.

2. Apprehension of the Divine Factor in the Relations of Life

The Hindu mystic can not endorse the view of the clergyman who said: "games are games and

religion is religion." Religion is not a Sunday affair but an every-day affair; it interpenetrates life; it is the informing principle of the relations of life, not a thing "extern". The Hindu race-consciousness rests on the idea of eternity; to it the next world is the nearest world; the unseen is not a distant Beyond but the Immanent energy of the Seen. It is significant to note that India has immortalised her *tirthas* (places of pilgrimages), but not her pleasure-gardens; her palaces have perished, her Art-Temples and Caves and Shrines endure. Her poets and preachers have sung and spoken of a nature-mysticism which means more than what Clifford called "cosmic emotion". The truth that God speaks through nature pouring love and worship in the hearts of the devout, burnt the souls of Hindu mystics; nature was to them an apparition of the Eternal; her phenomena were symbols of the One Idea, vibrations of the One Love-Life. And the mediæval mystic, Guru Nanak, did but re-word

the wisdom of the Vedas and Upanishads when he spoke of the Sun and the Moon as "God's altar-lights" and of the sky as "the sacred vessel of sacrifice to Him." Hindu philosophy is sustained and inspired by the same idea. Hindu thought rejects the conception of matter as a datum objective to God, as something lying over against the Infinite. Hindu mysticism proclaims the doctrine of the One-Self-Revealing-Spirit; the phenomenal is not ignored but neither is it emphasised: the phenomenal is subordinated to the Unseen; the Absolute is interpreted as the Self-Revealing Spirit. Keshub Chunder Sen, a practical mystic of modern India, said: "It is un-Asiatic not to know God". One remembers the words of St. Bernard: "The more I know of myself, the more I know of God."

3. Heart-love of God

The Hindu mystic cries with the yearning of a woman-soul for a vision of God unveiled.

He is a *bhakta*; he adores God as the spouse of the soul; his daily worship is one of tearful, fervid love for the First and only Fair. The Vedic bard sings: "Love God as the maiden loves her secret lover." Another mystic writes: "Our journey is to the Rose-garden of Union."

Let me indicate, in brief, the value of this mystical message of the East to the West.

(1) It seems to me that Europe's urgent need is soul-rest. Your civilization makes for power and progress; does it, also, make for peace of soul? Is it true the life of Europe is immersed in streams of excitement? Is it true life in the West is smitten with ambitions, feverish struggles, cut-throat competition, efforts of multi-millionaires to have more and more? Is it true that even your socialism or what goes by that name has a materialistic conception of the human good? Is it true you feel oppressed by the rapid acceleration of externalism? Then listen to the words of

an Eastern lover of the West. You needs must develop a contemplative attitude to life. It will give you repose where you have worry now; it will give you strength where you have struggle now; it will deepen your life; it will develop your socialism into solidarity; it will reveal the spiritual values of life which commercialism ignores; it will save your society from mammon-worship; it will help you in solving the problems of your social democracy. Europe must save her life from within: she must recognise within the Veil of Time the Life of Eternity; she must live the Ideal which transcends Time in the processes of life. "Act in union with the Divine," says Shri Krishna. Europe must realise this truth. Not the "cult of the ego," not the love of excitement, but a life of restful character is the piteous need of the world. The mystical truth must be reproclaimed that Eternity is the foundation of time, and that they who fail to realise the eternal value of

time miss the meaning of life. Progress must be interpreted not in terms merely of economic values, but in relation to those deeper values of life which constitute the Kingdom of the good. The world is not an illusion: it is not a dream: the world is an allegory, a representation of a divine Idea; and life must be a co-operation with the idea. This co-operation is impossible without contemplation; there is a spiritual centre within; thither must Europe retreat to hold communion with the Lord, to cultivate soul-relations with the Unseen, and gather strength to enrich the world.

(2) Europe stands in need, too, of a new constructive theology.

(*a*) The overshadowing prominence of ecclesiastical institutions and appeal to external authority are not congenial to the growth of the Religious Idea. When the inward vision is opened, and the truth is recognised that the basis of religion is God-consciousness, that God is the Infinitely Intimate, it becomes

easy to transcend both deism and naturalism—the logical results of an external view of religion.

Theology must grow out of spiritual experiences; but how many of the writers on the psychology of religion bear this in mind? Spencer traces the origin of religion to the interpretation of dreams by primitive man! Ribot resolves it into fear of the unknown. Feuerbach would have us believe that religion is due to ignorant personification of man's desires; human desires make the Gods; the Gods are the *wunschwessen*! Gruppe does not hesitate to inform us that religion has its origin in selfishness! Comte identifies Christianity with egoism and Nietzsche would have us follow the aggressive "superman"! Many more propose theories of the origin and nature of religion. They but spin shining cobwebs. Knowledge comes of experience, not speculation. The man of spiritual experience knows that religion is not an accident of human life, but

is the constitution of the soul. The God-Idea is immanent in all experience; for God is the "In-soul" of all.

(*b*) One hears so much in the West of "conflict" between science and religion. If nature be viewed from the standpoint of the mystic, it is easy to see that there is no conflict but essential harmony between science and religion. Nature is then seen to be the outer court of the Spirit; as one of our ancient books has it: "The world is God-vestured." How pregnant the "new saying" of Jesus!—

"Raise the stone and Thou shall find me
Cleave the wood and there am I."

Yes, God Himself acts out His intentions through matter. "Matter," says Duhring "is the Absolute Being." No, says the Eastern mystic; matter is a vehicle of the Eternal Idea. The cosmic process is meant to educate finite centres of consciousness. Astronomical systems are "stable", nature is a system of laws, the universe is evolutionary, the world

is a system, because the Creative Energy is immanent in all.

"A fire-mist and a planet
A crystal and a cell;
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,
Some call it Evolution,
Its deeper name is God!"

Yes, nature is not an alien, an "other," but an out-breathing of the Lord. "Nature" says one of your thinkers, "is the infinite illusion of our senses." To the true mystic, nature is a theophany, a vesture of the World-Spirit. "In Thy Light we see light!" The forces of nature bespeak God's ever-present activity, His living volition in the world.

(*c*) The more I think of it the more I feel that the mystical message of the East will answer the needs of Christian Consciousness. That there is urgent need of reconstruction

in Christian theology few will deny. Years ago Carlyle raised the cry in his "Sartor Resartus": he pointed out that the old Hebrew clothes of Christian theology were outworn and did not suit the age. And one of your great preachers, Rev. R. J. Campbell, said not long ago: "Every one knows that for the last twenty years there has been considerable uneasiness in the churches; . . . the lines of divergence between the old and the new go down deep and there is great cleavage." Old creeds no longer appeal to the people, and I am startled at the statement of one of your writers, the author of "The Revelation of the Trinity," who said, "The Athanasian Creed is as necessary to Religion as Geometry is to Architecture!!!"

The West cries with a piteous cry for a re-interpretation of the teachings of Jesus. Higher criticism has rendered rich services to the cause of truth; but it has, also, let loose the forces of negation which must needs be

subordinated to the constructive energy of Higher Reason. English Unitarianism has done not a little to vindicate the place of emancipated reason in Religion; but it has failed to penetrate to the spiritual concepts and heart of orthodoxy; I maintain with Carlyle "had this doctrine of the Divinity of Christ been lost, Christianity would have vanished like a dream." Old Evangelicism is a spent force. Rationalism, intolerant of the spiritual and emotional values of life, has no future; and orthodoxy with its perilous outgrowth of the external in religion—what Eucken calls the "sense-bound organization of the West"—has confessed its failure already. Europe needs an *inward movement* in theology.

Harnack, in his "History of Dogma" has done well to point out that much which is not essential to Christianity crept into the Church because Christian Faith became closely intermingled with Greek thought. Nor can it be

denied that Christian theology has been entangled with categories of Roman law, with the result that external ideas of God, atonement, sin, heaven, hell, the Church, the sacraments, and salvation have long prevailed. The theologies of Athanasius and Augustine, of the Reformers, the Methodists, and the Oxford Movement have had their day. For a new enrichment of the Christian consciousness it is essential that the West should turn to the East. The truths which the heart of orthodoxy has treasured for centuries, must be re-interpreted by the mystical consciousness of the East. Jesus was an Eastern; and the East is, I humbly submit, in a better position to interpret the meaning of His life, to appreciate the message of His "death". As we of the East read the sacred story of the past, we feel the fascination of His personality; we read of the lily, the sparrow and the well and other things familiar to sons of the East. His intimacy with the natural, his insight into the human

soul, his mysticism of sympathy, his very special love for the child, the poor, the ungodly, the suffering outcastes, the lost sheep whom the world neglects but not the Great Mother-Heart of the Universe, his loneliness revealing the beauty of sorrow, his sacrificial tenderness, his gracious words, his still more gracious silence, his ethics of love and humanity, his religion of communion with the Father in the Kingdom within, his pure living, his death by which he gave the world a symbol of the Sacred Heart of the Eternal—these things are eloquent to the idealistic mystical soul of the East. The Christ of God is immortal; and in some calm moments the suggestion comes to me that the God of Nations summons the East to come out of her seclusion, and enter upon her world-mission of re-interpreting the message of Christ against whom Europe has sinned so long. The West needs some Apostles from the East to re-word the truth that God is the In-soul of all, to interpret Christ-consciousness,

and so to vindicate again the wisdom of Jesus, the Eastern *yogi*.

We are at the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the race; the birth-hour of a New Age is upon us. Reconstructions, social, political, philosophical and religious, are imminent; and in these both East and West will make their presence and power felt. The West will teach the lessons of scientific organization, ethical energy, and political progress; she will show the value of personality and the importance of environment; she will vindicate the Gospel of work, and gladly and gratefully will the East learn of the West, science, technics and practics. Yes—but the West too must turn to the East to study the mysteries of higher life, to assimilate Ancient Wisdom, to develop the mystic sense—to recognise nature not alone as the laboratory of the scientist, but also as a sanctuary of the Spirit—to practise meditation—to discern that if work is worship,

worship, too, is our work. Yes; the East is destined to speak again in the Commonwealth of Culture. Her mystical insight combined with the intellectual energy of the West will give a new world-philosophy. Europe must realise the truth that Reality is not merely a thought-concept, but a soul-experience and may be known not by criticism of categories but by sympathetic insight and life supplementing, not superseding, the function of logical understanding. Hindu mysticism does not disparage Reason as Cardinal Newman did. Hindu mysticism insists that man's *whole* nature and not the intellect alone must be used in the search and service of Truth. Neither the German passion for intellectual matters, nor the Greek delight in form and beauty, nor the English taste for generalizations from empirical data can, alone, give a constructive metaphysic. The mystical intuitions of the East must correct the abstractions of Western intellectualism.

Schopenhauer dreamt of a day when the wisdom of the East should flow to the West. In that day the mysticism of the East will, I believe, exert an influence as powerful as the theory of Evolution on Western thought and life. Then Europe will have a new outlook upon world-religions, and her theologians will discern the truth that no religion is false, neither is any final, that the New World-Religion must be a Religion of Synthesis, and that the Church of the Future must be the Union-Church of East and West.

THE WISDOM OF THE RISHIS

THE night before last I dreamt a dream! And, methinks, there came to me a message from the "Dreamland." I asked—"Where is the Home of the Rishis?" And I saw myself standing before a *tapoban*, and it said to me—"Here!"

The more I think of the Vedic—Upanishadic age, the more I understand how great was that age in human evolution. The people then were nearer Nature and had clearer intuitions. The Aryans of that age could, therefore, know better the deeper values of life—the True, the Good, the Beautiful. They were more spiritual and more vital. They were nearer the Divine centre of life, the Divine *Shakti*. They knew truths by an inner sense—by meditation which was easier then than it is in the noisy crowded life of to-day—by spontaneous intuition and spiritual appreciation.

Man is becoming more complex, more "civilized" and, therefore, more mechanised, more materialised. So his finer senses, the inner senses—may we call them the "senses" of the Soul?—have suffered. With the result that he finds it difficult to read the Open Secret of Life.

The Rishis were Teachers, "Masters" of Wisdom. It was taught them by no books. No books *can* teach Wisdom. It was taught them direct by the Spirit of Things and Life. The Rishis received spiritual vibrations; these were clothed in words and originally inscribed on barks of trees. The ancient *mantras* preserved for us in the pages of the Vedas and the Upanishads—misunderstood by so many—are, I humbly submit, for the healing of the nations.

(1) In the ashramas was evolved a synthesis of culture and religion which has, I believe, a great value for the modern world. I do not deny evolution. Darwin and Spencer are

great names in history. Homage to them! They have opened new chapters in science and sociology. But what prove they? The body has evolved; it has become softer, more "sensitive" to pleasure and pain. The mind or "*manas*" has evolved; it has become more observant of the material environment, more adaptive to material conditions. But what of Intuition? The Inner Sense? The sense of Immediacy? Of Life as distinguished from mechanism? Of direct contact with the Divine Centre as distinguished from adjustment of means to materials ends? What of the vital sense of communion with the Whole? The sense of the Infinite? It seems to me the Inner Sense was much better evolved in the ancient ashramas. They took up the problems of culture of the Inner Senses, with an earnestness, a one-pointedness, an energy of self-abnegation and self-dedication so rare in these days of mechanical values and commercial materialism.

(2) The *ashramas* were situated in lonely nature-spots. Away from the madding crowds! Away from the currents of confusion which flow into our agitated, excited cities. The ashramas were situated in beautiful spots, blessed by nature-spirits. The ashramas were colleges of concentration. In the ashramas was developed a culture of concentration—not of books. Out of meditation have rolled the great books of Humanity. By a culture of concentration unrivalled, I believe, in human history, the Rishis discovered paths of approach to the Infinite from within. These paths, the inner routes to Reality, were set forth in systems of yoga.

(3) The ashramas were centres of *tapasya*. For the truth was realised that body, mind, and intuition must be disciplined before the Divine Mysteries could reveal Themselves and the pilgrim became a Rishi, an Initiate, a Master, a Seer. The programme of *tapasya* or self-discipline included (1) fasting, (2) *brahmacharya*,

(3) *upasana*, (4) nature-communion, and (5) *seva* of lower animals and men in need.

Let me say no more of this fivefold programme. Let me say but this; *tapasya* was not the end but a means to the end. The end was joy, was ecstasy, was *Ananda*. It was realised that the final word of life was not sorrow but Bliss. For Brahman is Bliss; and the world is in quest of happiness; for the world is a-seeking God. Modern India is restless. The modern world is in anguish. Nations wander from violence to violence. The solution of the problems of modern democracies alike in East and West lies not in abolishing religion but in new applications of the great truths of religion. Great was Napoleon—an instrument of the World-Shakti that sometimes rides a storm to purify and rebuild. But infinitely greater were the Initiates, the Rishis who saw that man was much more than an economic animal. Man is of the Eternal. Therefore the Sermon on

the Mount still holds the secret of the New Civilization. Therefore Humanity's hope is still in a Religion of the Rishis. Neitzsche's name is associated with a doctrine of the "superman". Neitzsche, it seems to me, was strong on the side of criticism; but he was weak on the side of construction or synthesis; and he missed the secret of the Superman. Thus he writes: "Slaves can adore a God who makes himself man and humbles himself. But the strong adore only their own ascent to the superman—the endless progression of human beauty, human grandeur, and human power." "The endless progress of human beauty, human grandeur, and human power!" Here is a flash of genius. But in saying that "the strong adore only their own ascent to the superman," Neitzsche shows a poor conception of the Rishis' doctrine of *Shakti*. The truly strong are those who adore a Strength diviner than their own. The truly strong are humble. But Neitzsche's "superman" is an

embodiment of aggressive power exploiting others in the interests of an "aristocratic" ideal. Neitzsche's "superman" is an egoist. And egoism, let me humbly submit, is a malady of the modern. Montague was an egoist. So was Rousseau. Read the opening words of his "Confessions": "I am like no man that I have ever seen. I dare to believe I am unlike any man that exists." Superior to Neitzsche's is Confucius' conception of the "superior man" (Kun-tji)—the model "gentleman"—the very reverse of Neitzsche's "superman". In the wisdom and lives of the Rishis we have, I humbly submit, a picture of the true "superman".

I believe a new cycle is coming. The present is a cycle of science turned, again and again, to destructive ends. The new cycle will be a cycle of science illumined by the wisdom that builds. A cycle of unification, of synthesis. May I name it symbolically a New Cycle of Krishna's Flute? The dominating civilizations

of the West are combative and power-intoxicated. "Be aggressive"—says Neitzsche. "Be brotherly"—is the message of the Rishis. In it is the voice of the Future. And only in a New Brotherly Civilization is the hope of our broken, bleeding world.

THE SUN-SYMBOL

O Shining One! O Savita!
Withdraw from us whatever Evil is,
And call to us the Good!

—VEDA

HERE is a suggestive text. These Ancient Texts are always suggestive. There is in them the concentrated essence of thought. Dr. Parker, an American Professor, says he has discovered a practical plan for drawing gold from the waters of Lake Mono in California. And I have often thought we may draw nectar, *amrita*, from Vedic *mantras*.

One of them is the Text I have imperfectly translated in the words at the top. This *mantra*, like so many others in the Vedas, is at once simple and profound. Simple in language. Profound in thought. There is

Symbolism in the Vedas. Not "idolatry"! Symbols are not idols. One of the great Symbols is the "Sun". There is a difference between "Surya" and "Savita". Sayana points out that the sun before rising is "Savitri" and after rising till its setting is Surya. May I not say that the Soul of the Sun is Savitri, whereas the body, the manifested sun is the Surya? The "phenomenal" "Sun" is the *Surya;* the Power enveloping is Savitri. This Power, the Surya-Shakti is Divine. The Surya-Shakti is Savitri. The very word is significant. It is connected with the word *Sava.* It means "One who sets in Motion." Savitri is the Shakti that sets in motion. One is reminded of Aristotle's definition of God as One who causes motion. The Vedic conception of God, then, is dynamic. Savitri is the Prime Mover of the phenomenal world.

In England they have started a solarium where patients go for "sun-cure". There are

"Light" Hospitals in which patients, stripped bare except for a loin-cloth, are cured by means of "Light-baths". Rays of light are most valuable for health. These "Light-rays" become vitamines in fruits. Dr. Hecter Mury rightly says that vitamines are "stored sunlight". Sunlight has a curative value. The sun is the great vivifier. Not without reason did the Rishis invoke Savitri in hymn after hymn of beauty and aspiration. Savitri is referred to in several hymns as "the impeller of the gods". In another hymn, the aspiration is breathed out—"May I, like Savitri, be lovely". He is the "shining One". He is the Synthesis of Brightness (Wisdom) and Energy (Shakti). Both these must be awakened in the *brahmacharis.* Therefore were they asked in the ancient ashramas to look at the "Sun" while studying the Aranyaka texts. The Aryan householder invoked Him for food. The Aryan student invoked Him for study. The Aryan king looked for His blessing at the

consecration ceremony. The Aryan youth prayed to Him for strength.

In the prayer of this *mantra*, the Rishi recognises the dualism of Good and Evil. So did Zoroaster. So did Jesus: "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." Evil, then, is not negation. Evil is a dark psychic energy. A psychic realm surrounds us, and prayer is a means of purifying our psychic atmosphere. The *mantras* are purifying vibrations: " Withdraw from us whatever Evil is, and call to us the Good." There is but one evil—separation, isolation. There is but one good—fellowship with the *Atman*, the *Self*. One of Its names is Savitri. So in the Savitri mantra, *Savitar* corresponds to the " Creator ". And in the Yajus and Brahmanas Savitri is the Prajapati. May I say that Savitri is the Solar Logos? To be in fellowship with Him is to grow in vitality and strength.

" Call to us the Good!" The Surya-Shakti calls to us the Good through *tapas*. So is

given us, in this ancient prayer, a hint of the Law of Growth. It is the Law of *tapas*. Look at yon tree! It grows, not without doing *tapas*. The trees stand in sun and rain! No organism but grows by absorbing within it rays of the burning sun. Every flower that grows is pierced by the rays. Every flower grows by *tapas*. In the realm of the spirit, the *tapas* is not outer but inner. External austerities do not take us far. What is essential is the *tapas* of Truth. In the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad we read that the man of outer tapas goes to the moon and is reborn on earth but the man who practises faith and truth, like Gautama, goes to a world whence there is no return. In this inner *tapas* is the secret of growth in the Good. And when *tapas* deepens into *yagna* or sacrifice, you are united with the Good, you become a co-worker with Ishwara, a helper of the Spirit of Evolution, a limb of the Great Sacrifice that, like the Sun, vivifies the Worlds.

THE SPIRIT OF SILENCE[1]

THIS morning, I desire to pass on to you a little thought which may be expressed thus: Drink the spirit of silence. That wonderful hymn which you sing—and I wish you to sing at the close of your meetings every night—the "Shantipath"—is it not fragrant with the message of silence? And as you read one section after another of the ancient scriptures of India, don't you find that the one note repeated again and again is *Shanti*? And haven't you noticed that every Hindu prayer closes on this note of Shanti, Shanti? Shanti was the dominant aspiration of the Rishis, of those great ones whose shadows still rest upon this beautiful place, Rajpur; for here we sit in the lap of the Himalayas. The Rishis were

[1] From an address at the Shakti Ashrama, Rajpur.

lovers of silence. And every great soul is a lover of silence. Of Buddha we read that from time to time he would sit under a tree in silent meditation. And of Jesus we read that when he was in the city to teach and preach and heal, he would spend the day in the midst of men, but when the night came he sought the hill-sides for silent communion.

To-day more even than in the ancient days, we need the healing, holy influence of silence. Am I wrong in saying that one feature of modern life is "noise"? We live in a world of noises, more perhaps in India than in many other countries. I have sometimes wished that I lived in a sound-proof house! Modern India moves in a world of deafening noises. Our railway stations are so noisy; not so the stations of Japan. There the porters will lift your luggage noiselessly. European homes and schools and colleges and libraries are more quiet than ours. We need to move in an

atmosphere of silence. Rishis were sons of silence. Work, work hard; but don't ignore the value of silence. Let me ask you to set apart every day at least one hour for silence.

Two blessings, especially, does silence bring. First, silence purifies. Carlyle wrote many volumes in praise of "the kingdom of silence". He appeared at a time when industrialism was disturbing the æsthetic and spiritual outlook of England. He protested against commercialism and mammon worship. Yes; there is a kingdom of silence; to be linked with it is to be purified. Here in Rajpur you have splendid opportunities for communion with silence. You can go out for silent walks and as you see these wonderful hills, these tall trees, these mystic skies, something of Nature's beauty will pass into you and you will be purified. Silence purifies us. Silence also vitalizes us, gives us strength which you may spend in the service of others.

Here then are two of the blessings of silence. Silence purifies; silence vitalizes. Sometimes you think silence makes a man weak. No: it makes him strong. After the silence period is over, a man may feel hungry, but hunger is a sign of returning strength; in silence flow into you nature's healing forces; and you become strong.

The Shakti of silent work is what India needs to-day. In our "public" life alas! there is so oft lovelessness; there is ambition; there is the desire to shine, and be "great". I long for the day when there will be bands of young men who will renounce low ambitions and who will have but this one "ambition"—to be silent servers of India. I shed tears when I think of the shadows we run after, "greatness", name and fame, publicity, popularity. All these are perishable things. The secret of nation-service is not there, but in the life of those who drink of the spirit of silence.

On this note let my talk close this morning. *Silent Service*: May that be your aspiration, your *mantra* every day! May you work in the spirit of silence! Then may you get from the All-Giver the *shakti* you need to build a mighty nation in the coming days.

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